



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SDDVA RECEIVES THE KEYS TO THE NEW VETERANS HOME

Brad Richardson, superintendent of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, in Hot Springs, was presented the keys to the new building.

Tyler Derflinger of Scull Construction presented the keys to Richardson last week. Staff are in the process of moving offices over to the new facility and will be moving our heroes to their new home on January 13th.

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SANTA MAKES NUMEROUS VISITS TO STATE VETERANS HOME

Mattie Mancuso, a twelve year old from Pierre, took her Christmas money and rather than spend it on herself, she bought Christmas gifts for our heroes in the Special Care Unit at the State Veterans Home.

Mattie and her mom hand delivered the gifts to the heroes last week.

Pierre Elks Lodge 1953 had another successful year with their Stocking Stuffer project. Elk Elves visited both

Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home and the VA Black Hills Healthcare System in Hot Springs and delivered over

\$28,742 in gifts, clothing, food, games, books, personal hygiene products, gift cards, cash and more.

Saturday night, the South Dakota National Guard held their annual Christmas party with our heroes. SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman attended the party and shared his holiday message. Games were

played, songs were sung, food was enjoyed and presents were unwrapped.

Mary Houseman and Carol Dawson from Oral delivered numerous handmade lap blankets for our heroes.

We are blessed to have so many "Santa's" that take

such good care of our he-

roes, not only at Christmas, but throughout the entire year. During the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our success possible. This holiday season, we are looking back with appreciation for your loyalty and looking forward to moving into our new Home and the New Year together.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM OUR LEAD TEAM AT MJF VETERANS HOME



Special holiday wishes from our leadership at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home.

Back row: Keaton Cummings- Physical Therapy, Mathew Steffen- VSO, Randall Meyers- Director of Operations & David Schiefen- Business Manager

Middle row: Left to right—Eric McMillin- Pharmacy Tech, Michelle Gross- Pharmacy Tech, Sue Beyer- Director of Nursing, Susan Wilcox- Assistant Director of Nursing, Bob Etzkorn- Physical Plant Manager I & Brad Richardson- Superintendent

Front row- Tom Inman- Physical Plant Manager II, Deb Grismer- Chaplain, Ann Remington- MDS Coordinator, Santa Claus, and John Lane- Pharmacist.



“Good Horse”

*The circle is for the circle of life;
the hand represents man;
and the horse is the gift*

- ARTWORK BY DONALD MONTILEAUX -

WE INVITE YOU TO ATTEND

State Tribal Relations Events

In Partnership with the SD
Department of Veterans Affairs
JANUARY 27 & 28, 2016



South Dakota
DEPARTMENT OF
TRIBAL RELATIONS



Honoring Our Veterans

Join the South Dakota Department of Tribal Relations and the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27TH

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. - Tribal Veteran's Listening Session

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Luncheon

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Legislative Reception with
Lt. Governor Matt Michels

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28TH

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. - Tribal, Federal, & State
Veteran Booths

11:45 a.m. - State Tribal Relations Ceremony

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. - Traditional Meal

VISIT OUR SPONSOR BOOTHS ON JANUARY 27TH AT RED ROSSA AND OUR TRIBAL, STATE, & FEDERAL BOOTHS IN THE ROTUNDA ON JANUARY 28TH

RED SHIRT FRIDAY

South Dakota employers, schools and all citizens are encouraged to show their support for service members deployed overseas by participating in R.E.D. (Remember Everyone Deployed) Shirt Friday.

The South Dakota National Guard and the S.D. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve invites the public to participate by wearing a red shirt on all Fridays while South Dakota citizens are deployed to remember and honor members of the military for their service to the state and nation.

"Wearing red shirts on Fridays will send a strong and unified message to our service members and families that they are not forgotten and we appreciate their sacrifice to our country," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "Wearing a red shirt is a simple gesture, but the meaning behind it is significant."

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has demonstrated his support by signing a proclamation announcing all future Fridays that South Dakota citizens are deployed in harm's way to be R.E.D. Shirt Friday in South Dakota.

South Dakota businesses who employ National Guard and Reserve members are encouraged to provide additional support by:

- * Sending cards/letters to the unit or someone in the unit
- * Create a banner or video from your organization to send to the unit
- * Check in with the family of a deployed service member
- * Provide a meal for a family of a deployed service member
- * Use the hashtag #RememberEveryoneDeployed when posting your pictures to social media sites
- * Send a picture of your company to redshirtfriday.southdakota@gmail.com and we may share your picture through our social media sites
- * Support the S.D. Veteran's Home in Hot Springs or a veteran service organization in your community
- * Sign a Statement of Support through the ESGR to show your support (for more information about this please contact MAJ Lona Christensen, SD ESGR Program Director, at 605-737-6540)

Currently, there are more than 160 South Dakota Army and Air National Guard members serving overseas in Kuwait and Afghanistan.

I Support Red Fridays



VA PLANS TO PROPOSE EXPANDED DISABILITY BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that it plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

From 1953 to 1987, water sources at the base were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions. U. S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald decided to propose presumptions of service connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents following discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

"The water at Camp Lejeune was a hidden hazard, and it is only years later that we know how dangerous it was," said Secretary McDonald. "We thank ATSDR for the thorough review that provided much of the evidence we needed to fully compensate veterans who develop one of the conditions known to be related to exposure to the compounds in the drinking water."

ATSDR determined that the drinking water at Camp Lejeune was contaminated with perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, vinyl chloride, benzene and other petroleum contaminants from leaking storage tanks from 1953 to 1987. ATSDR also determined that prolonged exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of certain health conditions.

Based upon VA's review of current medical science and ATSDR's findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service connection for the following conditions:

Kidney Cancer	Liver Cancer
Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma	Leukemia
Multiple Myeloma	Scleroderma
Parkinson's Disease	Aplastic Anemia / Myelodysplastic Syndromes

The Secretary's proposal would also expand benefits eligibility to Reserve and National Guard personnel who served at Camp Lejeune for any length of time from August 1, 1953, through December 31, 1987. These personnel would be presumed to have been exposed to the contaminated water during their Reserve or National Guard service and, in appropriate circumstances, to have been disabled by such exposure during service, thus allowing them to qualify for VA benefits under the statutory definition of "veteran."

This would make them eligible for VA disability compensation and medical care for any of the presumptive conditions, and their surviving dependents would be eligible for dependency and indemnity compensation and burial benefits.

The VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While the VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, it encourages veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, and develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base, to file a disability compensation claim with the VA.

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EXPANDED DISABILITY BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

The VA will continue to grant claims for disabilities claimed to be associated with exposure to the contaminants that can be granted under current regulations and review of the evidence in each case. If a claim for service connection for one of the proposed presumptive conditions would be denied under current regulations, the denial will be stayed until VA issues its final regulations. The VA will announce when the regulations are final and presumptive benefits can begin to be awarded. For more information on applying for these benefits, visit:

http://benefits.va.gov/compensation/claims-postservice-exposures-camp_lejeune_water.asp.

Veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1987, are already eligible to receive VA healthcare for up to 15 health conditions. More information, including a full list of covered conditions, can be found online at:

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/camp-lejeune/index.asp>.

Veterans can establish eligibility for healthcare benefits by submitting VA Form 10-10EZ online at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, downloading it at www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/1010EZ-fillable.pdf and returning it to any VA Medical Center or Clinic, or by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM (Eastern Time).

The VA is reimbursing certain veterans' family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions. More information can be found at:

<https://www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov>.

BIG PAWS CANINE RECEIVES 2015 BEST OF SIOUX FALLS AWARD

Big Paws Canine has been selected for the 2015 Best of Sioux Falls Award in the Community Organizations category by the Sioux Falls Award Program.

Each year, the Sioux Falls Award Program identifies companies that have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community.

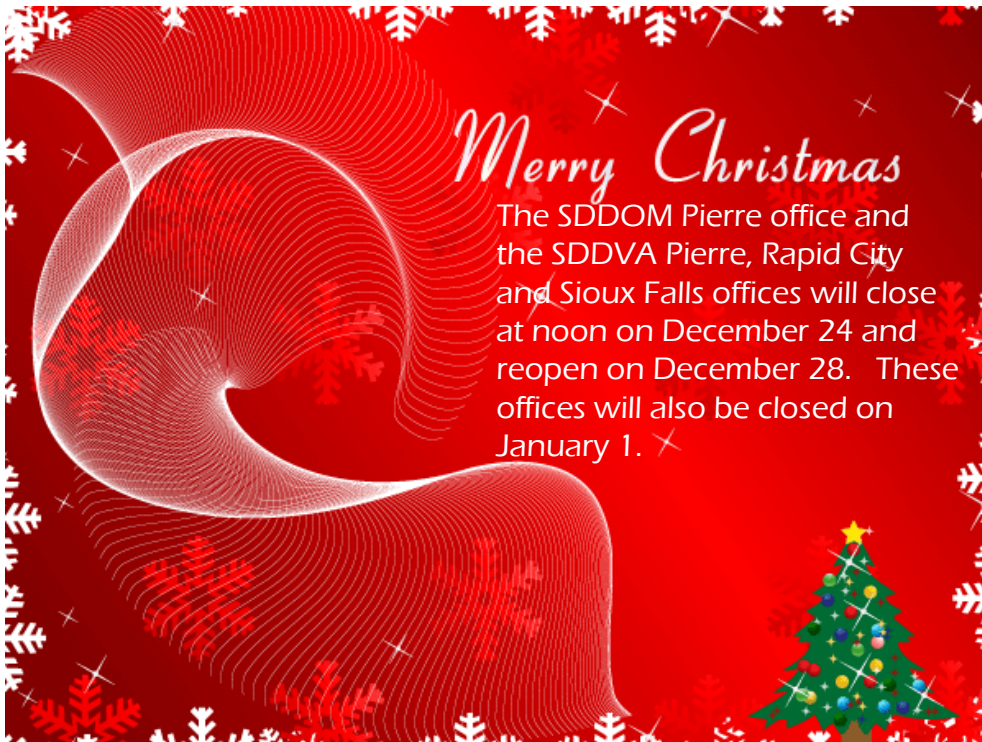
Various sources of information were gathered and analyzed to choose the winners in each category. The 2015 Sioux Falls Award Program focuses on quality, not quantity. Winners are determined based on the information gathered both internally by the Sioux Falls Award Program and data provided by third parties.

The Sioux Falls Award Program is an annual awards program honoring the achievements and accomplishments of local businesses throughout the Sioux Falls area. Recognition is given to those companies that have shown the ability to use their best practices and implemented programs to generate competitive advantages and long-term value.

The Sioux Falls Award Program was established to recognize the best of local businesses.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
Jan. 12—SD Legislative Session Opens—Pierre—1:00 pm
Jan. 12—Awarding of the Korean Ambassador Peace Medals—Capitol Rotunda—Pierre—2:30 pm (CT)
Jan. 14—Veterans Legislative Breakfast—Pierre
Jan. 27-28—State Tribal Relations Days—Pierre
Feb. 12-14—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Huron Crossroads
Apr. 4—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
April 15-17—DAV Convention—Rapid City—Adoba
Jun. 16-19—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota—Watertown
Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)



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